

REMARKS

This Amendment is submitted in response to the March 17, 2006 Office Action issued in connection with the above-identified patent application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5, 12, 25, 32, 35 and 43 have been amended as shown above, and claims 4 and 34 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner review and consider the foregoing amendment in view of the following remarks.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 3, 18-21, 24, 25-29, 32 and 33 as allegedly anticipated by published U.S. patent application No. 2004/0044312 (Svendsen et al.). The Examiner has also rejected claims 22, 23, 30 and 31 as allegedly anticipated by Svendsen et al. However, the Examiner has indicated that claims 4-17 and 33-42 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

In response, it is believed that the limitations of dependent claim 4 without the feature that the flange be “facing said barrel” distinguishes over the cited Svendsen reference and that the limitation of claim 3, i.e. that the “second shield is located in the first shield when the second shield is in the first position”, is not needed to distinguish over the Svendsen reference. Accordingly, claim 1 has been amended to include the features of claim 4 therein (with the exception that the “facing said barrel” limitation has not been included). As a result, claim 4 has now been cancelled and claims 5 and 12 have been amended to change their respective dependencies such that claim 5 now depends from claim 3 and claim 12 now depends from claim 1. In view of the amendment to independent claim 1, it is believed that claims 2-3 and 5-24 are now in condition for immediate allowance.

Independent claim 25 has also now been amended in a manner similar to claim 1. Accordingly, it is believed that amended independent claim 25 with its dependent claims 26-31 are now in condition for immediate allowance.

Turning now to claims 32-42, the Office Action indicates that claim 33 would be allowable. This appears to be inconsistent with the Examiner's statement that claim 4 would be allowable. In particular, claim 33 is similar to claim 3 whereas claim 34 is similar to claim 4. Accordingly, it is believed that an error exists in the Office Action and that claim 34 (not claim 33) contains the allowable subject matter. Thus, claim 32 has now been amended to include the features of now-cancelled claim 34 therein with the exception that the "facing said barrel" limitation has been removed. It is believed that amended claim 32 is now allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 1. Moreover, in view of the cancellation of claim 34, claim 35 has been amended to be dependent on claim 31. It is believed that amended claim 32, with claims 33 and 35-42 depending therefrom are now in condition for immediate allowance.

Lastly, independent claim 43 has been amended in a similar manner as the other independent claims discussed above, namely, to include the feature "wherein said second shield comprises a flange at an end of said second shield, said retaining means acting on said flange for holding said second shield in said first position". Accordingly, it is believed that claim 43 is now also in condition for immediate allowance.

If any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
COHEN, PONTANI, LIEBERMAN & PAVANE LLP

By 

Edward M. Weisz
Reg. No. 37,257
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1210
New York, New York 10176
(212) 687-2770

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